THE CONNOISSEUR.

By Mr. *TOWN*,

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Hoc opus, hoc ſtudium parvi properemus et ampli,
Si volumus patriæ, ſi nobis vivere chari. HOR.

To Mr. TOWN.

SIR,

EVERY *Engliſhman*, who has the good of his country at heart, muſt lament the perplexity which our miniſters labour under, in contriving ways and means to raiſe money for the preſent exigence of affairs. I have with pleaſure hearkened to the ſeveral projects propoſed in the debates of patriots in our coffee-houſes and private clubs: but though I find they are unanimous in allowing the neceſſity of levying new taxes, every one is willing to ſhift off the burthen from himſelf.

I was introduced the other night into a ſet of worthy citizens, who very zealouſly took this ſubject into conſideration over their evening pipe. One of them a grave gentleman, pulling the *Evening Poſt* out of his pocket, and putting on his ſpectacles, read aloud to us the ſeveral methods already propoſed; to which many wiſe objections were immediately ſtarted by the company. "What's that? ſays an old don, "(who I afterwards found had a ſmall eſtate in houſes) An "additional duty upon bricks, and pan-tiles, and plain-tiles, "I ſuppoſe they will lay a tax upon plain-tile-pegs by and "bye?" This ſpeech was received with an hearty chuckle of applauſe from the reſt of the company; when another took occaſion to obſerve, "that he very much approved the "ſcheme for laying a larger tax upon cards and dice; "one of which he called the *devil's books*, and the other his *bones*." The duty upon plate might perhaps have paſſed into a law in this aſſembly, if it had not been vehemently oppoſed by one member, (whom I diſcovered to be a ſilver-ſmith,) in which he was ſeconded by the landlord of the houſe, who had a ſeat in this meeting, and told us, "that it would lye very hard upon publicans, as nobody "would now drink their porter out of a pewter-pot." Theſe and the like arguments induced us to ſet aſide all the projects, that had been offered hitherto and to conſult together in order to find new ones in their room; among which I could not but ſmile at the propoſal of an honeſt peruke-maker, who adviſed the levying of a poll-tax upon all that wore their own hair, "For, ſays he, we have never had "good times, ſince wigs were out of faſhion. What rare days "were thoſe in Queen *Anne*'s reign, when the nobility and "gentry wore large flaxen flows of thirty guineas price! And

"as

" as you may ſee in my lord *Godolphin*'s monument in *Weſt-*
" *minſter* Abby, a prime miniſter's wig, could not be made,
" I am ſure, under fifty guineas."

THE diſcourſe that paſſed at this ſociety of politicians has led me to turn my thoughts on deviſing ſome method, that might anſwer the preſent demands for a ſupply, with the leaſt injury to the community. On this account I am of Opinion that private vices (according to the favourite tenet of *Maunderville*) may in ſome meaſure be converted into public benefits, by laying a certain tax or duty on the faſhionable amuſements of the gay and polite world. For this purpoſe I have with great pains and labour contrived a plan, a few heads of which, without further preface, I ſhall (with your leave) ſubmit to the conſideration of thoſe whom it may concern.

FIRST then, I would propoſe, that no perſons of quality, or others, ſhould be allowed to keep any route, drum, aſſembly, viſiting-day, (or whatever other name it may hereafter be called by,) at which more than one hundred perſons ſhall be found aſſembled, without paying a certain rate for every ſuch route, drum, &c. The number of theſe meetings, which are held in this town, (including the city of *London* and the ſuburbs thereof) I have computed, upon an exact calculation, to amount annually to eight thouſand three hundred and upwards; ſo that if a duty, at only ſix-pence *per* head, were to be levied upon the company, it would bring in a prodigious income to the government; deducting for the decreaſe conſequent of this tax, as alſo for thoſe which we may expect will be ſmuggled or carried on clandeſtinely. And as gaming is an eſſential diverſion at all theſe meetings, I would further adviſe, that every card-table be marked

marked and numbered, in the ſame manner as waggons and coaches, and a proportionable rate fixed on them according to the degree and quality of the owners. Be it enacted moreover, that extraordinary licences ſhall be taken out for playing at cards on the Sabbath-day; but that theſe be granted only to perſons of the higheſt rank and faſhion.

AT the preſent juncture of affairs every one will agree with me, that if an abſolute prohibition be impracticable, an heavy duty ſhould be laid on the importation of *French* faſhions and fopperies into this kingdom. It is therefore but reaſonable, that all *French* cooks, valets de chambre, milliners, mantua-makers, hair-cutters, &c. ſhould be at leaſt doubly taxed, as it is notorious that they exact from the dupes, who employ them, more than double the wages or price for their labours, that our own modeſt countrymen would require. This tax I make no doubt, would produce no inconſiderable ſum for the public uſe: and as our ladies, though I would not ſuſpect that they have *French* hearts, are ambitious of wearing *French* complexions, a further ſum might alſo be raiſed by fixing an high duty upon *rouge* and *carmine*.

I SHALL not dwell on other particulars, which might be turned in the ſame manner to the public good; ſuch as a tax on kept miſtreſſes, for example, which practice is now become ſo generally faſhionable, that I queſtion not but a duty properly levied on them would be ſufficient to maintain all the widows of our ſoldiers and ſailors, who ſhall happen to be killed in the ſervice. But as it is incumbent on every *Engliſhman* to expoſe his life in defence of his country againſt the common enemy, I muſt particularly recommend, that ſome means may be deviſed, that the gallant feats

feats of thoſe men of honour, who rather chuſe to riſk their lives in the modiſh way of duelling, may be attended with ſome advantage to their countrymen. I would therefore adviſe, that ſwords and piſtols of a ſettled length and bore, with the Tower-ſtamp, be provided by the government for the uſe of Duelliſts, and that they ſhall not preſume to make uſe of any other, under pain of incurring the guilt of murder. Theſe weapons may be let out at a certain price; and if one of the parties happen to kill the other, the ſurvivor ſhall be ſubject to a fine according to his rank and ſtation, and a jury ſhall be directed to bring in the verdict, *Self-Defence*. In like manner, perſons of quality may have leave granted them to put an end to their own lives, after an ill luck at cards, or the like emergent occaſions; when, upon paying a certain rate, they may be indulged in a private execution from the hands of *Jack Ketch*, and the Coroner's inqueſt ſhall be directed to bring in their verdict, *Lunacy*.

I am,

SIR,

Your humble Servant, &c.

To Mr. TOWN.

SIR,

AS you are a CONNOISSEUR, I ſhall make no apology for deſiring you to give the following Advertiſement (which has already appeared in the *Daily Advertiſer*) a place in ſome corner of your paper. By doing this you will greatly oblige the *Virtuoſos in Flowers*, as well as

Your humble Servant, &c.

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